MARVEL 1

DONNY CATES • RYAN STEGMAN • JP MAYER • FRANK MARTIN

ABSOLUTE CARNAGE

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CHAPTER ONE:

THE BLEEDING KING

AT ONE OF THE LOWEST POINTS OF HIS LIFE, DISGRACED REPORTER EDDIE BROCK CAME INTO CONTACT WITH AN AGGRESSIVE AND PARASITIC ALIEN ORGANISM CALLED A **SYMBIOTE**. SENSING BROCK'S ANGER, THE CREATURE BONDED WITH HIM, AND THEIR UNION GRANTED HIM POWERS SIMILAR TO THOSE OF THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN, AS WELL AS A NUMBER OF UNIQUE ABILITIES, AND THE TWO FOUGHT CRIME AS **VENOM**.

BUT BROCK AND THE SYMBIOTE ARE SEPARATED NOW, DRIVEN APART AFTER EDDIE LEARNED IT HAD BEEN TAMPERING WITH HIS MEMORIES PRIOR TO THE WAR OF THE REALMS. HE ALSO LEARNED THAT HE HAS A SON NAMED DYLAN WHO HAS BEEN LED TO BELIEVE THAT EDDIE IS HIS OLDER BROTHER.

ALL THIS WHILE A FAMILIAR EVIL HAS BEEN AT WORK ON THE PERIPHERY OF EDDIE'S WORLD, WITH EDDIE AND EVERYONE HE CARES ABOUT DEAD IN ITS SIGHTS.

SOMEHOW, BROCK WILL NEED TO KEEP HIMSELF AND HIS SON ALIVE THROUGH THE COMING STORM...

ABSOLUTE CARNAGE

WRITER
DONNY CATES

PENCILER
RYAN STEGMAN

INKER
JP MAYER

COLOR ARTIST
FRANK MARTIN

LETTERER
VC's CLAYTON COWLES

RYAN STEGMAN, JP MAYER, & **FRANK MARTIN**
COVER ARTISTS

JOHN TYLER CHRISTOPHER [ACTION FIGURE];
ADI GRANOV [CODEX];
GABRIELE DELL'OTTO [CULT OF CARNAGE];
MARK BAGLEY, RANDY EMBERLIN &
EDGAR DELGADO [HIDDEN GEM];
KYLE HOTZ & **DAN BROWN** [INTERLOCKING];
MIKE DEODATO JR. & **RAIN BEREDO** [PARTY];
AARON KUDER [YOUNG GUNS];
ARTGERM; NICK BRADSHAW & **MORRY HOLLOWELL;**
RON LIM & **ISRAEL SILVA**
VARIANT COVER ARTISTS

JOE FRONTIRRE LOGO DESIGN
ANTHONY GAMBINO PRODUCTION & DESIGN
DANNY KHAZEM ASSISTANT EDITOR
DEVIN LEWIS EDITOR
NICK LOWE EXECUTIVE EDITOR

C.B. CEBULSKI EDITOR IN CHIEF
DAN BUCKLEY PRESIDENT
JOE QUESADA CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER
ALAN FINE EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

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"OKAY, LOOK. I'M NOT GOING TO SUGARCOAT THIS FOR YOU. THINGS ARE ABOUT TO GET REALLY @#$%&@ BAD.

"IF YOU WANT TO SURVIVE THIS, I NEED YOU TO PAY ATTENTION TO EVERY WORD I'M ABOUT TO TELL YOU.

"LONG TIME AGO, THERE WAS THIS GOD NAMED ***KNULL.*** HE WAS HERE BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE. HE RULED OVER THE ENDLESS NOTHING THAT WAS PRE-CREATION. ***THE ABYSS.***

"HE'S THE ONE WHO ***CREATED*** THE SYMBIOTES.

"HE'S THEIR GOD. OR HE...***WAS,*** I GUESS.

"SEE, KNULL WAGED WAR ACROSS THE COSMOS KILLING EVERYTHING LIVING AND BRIGHT. EVERYTHING THAT THREATENED HIS INFINITE BLACK KINGDOM.

"THE SYMBIOTES ROSE UP AGAINST HIM, AND NOW HE'S CAGED INSIDE WHAT WE USED TO THINK WAS THE ***PLANET OF THE SYMBIOTES.***

"TURNS OUT IT'S NOT A PLANET AT ALL.

"JUST BILLIONS OF HIS OWN CREATIONS FORMING A CAGE AROUND HIM, HOLDING HIM DOWN.

"HE'S THERE RIGHT NOW. SLEEPING. IMPRISONED.

"IN THE VOID.

"FOR NOW...

"ANYWAY, FLASH-FORWARD A COUPLE BILLION YEARS AND YOU GOT ***ME.***

"I BONDED WITH ONE OF KNULL'S CREATIONS.

"TOGETHER WE WENT BY ***VENOM.*** BUT YOU KNOW THAT ALREADY.

"WE--ME AND THE OTHER--WE AREN'T TOGETHER ANYMORE, BUT WE...WE HAD A GOOD RUN.

"BUT SEE, MY SYMBIOTE, IT DIDN'T JUST BOND WITH ME. IT, *UH*...HAS A BIT OF A COMPLICATED PAST.

"IT'S HAD OTHER HOSTS. ***LOTS*** OF OTHER HOSTS.

"AND EVERY TIME IT, OR ONE OF ITS OFFSPRING, BONDED WITH SOMEONE, WELL, IT TURNS OUT THE SYMBIOTES DON'T JUST LEAVE THEIR HOSTS THE WAY THEY FOUND THEM...

"NO, THEY LEAVE A LITTLE PIECE BEHIND. WRAPPED AROUND YOUR DNA. IT'S HOW THEIR SPECIES COMMUNICATES INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR HOSTS TO THE LARGER HIVE.

"THIS THING. THAT LITTLE PIECE...

"...WE'RE CALLING IT ***THE CODEX.***

"NOW, MY SYMBIOTE AND ITS OFFSPRING, THEY'VE BEEN CUT OFF FROM THE HIVE FOR A LONG DAMN TIME.

"BUT--AND HERE'S THE ***IMPORTANT*** PART--THE THINKING IS, IF ALL OF THOSE LITTLE PIECES OF THE CODEX CAN BE COLLECTED, WHOEVER HOLDS THEM ALL CAN ***RECONNECT*** TO THE HIVE.

"AND MAYBE, JUST MAYBE...

"...THEY CAN TALK TO GOD.

"AND THEY CAN WAKE HIM BACK UP."

NEW YORK CITY.
NOW.

AND THEN WE *ALL* DIE.

ANY QUESTIONS?

UMMM...

SO...THE MAN WHO'S TRYING TO COLLECT THESE PIECES...HE'S--

NOT A MAN. ***CARNAGE.*** RESURRECTED SOMEHOW BY SOME KINDA CULT THAT WORSHIPS KNULL.

RIGHT. BUT HE ***WAS,*** RIGHT? A MAN?

YEAH, ***CLETUS KASADY.***

WORST SERIAL KILLER TO EVER WALK THE EARTH.

BODY COUNT ONLY DICTATORS AND PLAGUES CAN DREAM OF.

RIGHT.

OKAY.

ANYTHING ELSE HORRIFYING I SHOULD KNOW?

YOU'RE MY SON. BUT I CAN'T TELL YOU BECAUSE EVERYTHING THAT EVER TOUCHES ME ROTS AND WITHERS AND DIES.

NO. THAT'S ABOUT THE SIZE OF IT.

SO WHAT ARE WE GOING TO--

NO. NOT AFTER LAST TIME. I'M PUTTING YOU SOMEWHERE SAFE UNTIL I CAN FIGURE OUT A PLAN.

WHAT? WHERE?

STILL FIGURING THAT PART OUT. I HAVE ONE IDEA, BUT I HATE IT. SO IT MIGHT BE THE BEST ONE.

UNTIL THEN, WE HAVE TO ASSUME WE'RE BEING HUNTED.

WE JUST GOTTA KEEP A LOW...

WANTED
EDDIE BROCK
EXTREMELY DANGEROUS

...PROFILE.

EDDIE...
WHAT IS THIS?
WHAT DID
YOU--

LEWIS BANK

Awards

WANTED
EDDIE BROCK
EXTREMELY DANGEROUS

HARRY AND

WE NEED TO MOVE. NOW.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND, IT SAYS YOU KILLED PEOPLE AT *RYKER'S ISLAND?*

WHO?

THAT WASN'T ME. HE'S PLAYING WITH ME.

KASADY.

WHO'S *LEE PRICE?*

NO ONE. JUST KEEP MOVING. WE HAVE TO...

@#$%!

WHAT?

BEHIND US. WE'RE BEING FOLLOWED.

HEY! STOP!

POLICE

MOVE!

OW! HEY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

WE'RE GETTING ON THIS TRAIN.

COME ON! HE'S RIGHT BEHIND US.

COME ON. COME ON, HURRY!

OKAY. OKAY. I DON'T SEE HIM!

I THINK WE'RE GOING TO BE--

HNH!

SHOVE

AH!

EDDIE! THE TRAIN IS--

MOVE, MOVE!

CAREFUL! DON'T TOUCH THE RAIL, IT'S--

IT'S COMING! WE HAVE TO--

I GOT YOU. I GOT YOU, JUST HOLD ON TO--

EDDIE!

I'M HERE.

YOU.

NO.

SKUNCH

US.

EDDIE? ARE YOU...

YEAH, KID...

...WE'RE FINE.

YOU'RE BACK.

I NEVER LEFT, EDDIE. BEEN... WATCHING OVER YOU.

I CAN HEAR YOU AGAIN. HOW IS THAT--

BONDED WITH DARK MAGIC. WE ARE BETTER NOW.

CAN FEEL YOU RESISTING US, EDDIE. NOT BONDING FULLY.

I... I'M SORRY. I CAN'T DO THIS AGAIN.

I'M NOT STRONG ENOUGH.

SORRY TOO, EDDIE. BUT WE MUST BE TOGETHER NOW.

HE IS COMING.

FREEZE!

E-EDDIE BROCK! STEP AWAY FROM THE BOY AND PUT YOUR HANDS WHERE WE CAN SEE THEM! NOW!

NO TIME FOR THIS, EDDIE. MUST LEAVE. THESE MEN WILL DIE.

LISTEN TO ME. I AM NOT YOUR ENEMY. I AM NOT GOING TO HURT ANYONE.

TELL IT TO THE *TRAIN* YOU JUST DERAILED, PSYCHO! I AM NOT GOING TO TELL YOU AGAIN.

STEP AWAY FROM THE CHILD AND GET ON YOUR KNEES! NOW!

DYLAN...

I NEED YOU TO GO WITH THESE MEN, OKAY? YOU'LL BE SAFE AND--

EDDIE!

WHAT?! NO!

LISTEN TO ME! NOW!

DAMMIT, KID. DON'T ARGUE WITH ME. NOW JUST--

RUN!

TRIED TO TELL YOU, EDDIE!

OH GOD...

IT'S HIM!

CARNAGE IS HERE!

WELL, HELLO, DADDY!

WE SHOULD CATCH UP

WH-WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?!

OFFICERS, YOU NEED TO GET OUT OF HERE. TAKE MY--TAKE THE KID WITH YOU AND RUN LIKE HELL.

WE'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE.

NEED TO BE CAREFUL, EDDIE.

NEVER FACED ANYTHING LIKE HIM.

HAHAHA!

HIS SYMBIOTE. I SENSE IT.

HE'S WEARING THE DRAGON WE FOUGHT WITH REX. THE ONE THAT ALMOST KILLED US.

THWAMM

THAT'S NOT GONNA CUT IT, BROCK!

HAVEN'T YOU HEARD?

EDDIE, HE'S WEARING THE GRENDEL!

I DON'T THINK WE CAN WIN THIS!

WE'RE A GOD NOW!

AGH!

YOU KNOW WHAT, BROCK? I ALWAYS THOUGHT YOU'D LOOK BETTER IN RED

GRAB

GUH!

LET'S SEE IF WE CAN FIX THAT!

NEVER...NEVER BEEN HIT THAT HARD IN MY LIFE.

YOUR ORBITAL SOCKET IS BROKEN, EDDIE. YOUR BRAIN IS HEMORRHAGING.

CAN FIX YOU, BUT WE NEED TO RUN AWAY FROM THIS.

N...NO...

THIS IS... MY PROBLEM T'FIX.

WE...WE END THIS. RIGHT--

LISTEN.

EDDIE, PLEASE!

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THINGS ARE DIFFERENT NOW.

DYLAN...

PAY ATTENTION TO ME!

AGH!

WHO'S THE BOY, DADDY?! WHO IS HE TO YOU?!

EDDIE, DO SOMETHING! GET UP!

AGH!

I'LL PEEL HIS FLESH FROM HIS SOUL EITHER WAY, BROCK!

THERE IS NO FIGHTING THIS. THIS IS THE END OF THE LIGHT.

HE IS COMING! GOD IS--

BURN!

EDDIE, NO!

NOT THE THIRD--

RAGHHHH!

AGGHH!

EDDIE.

EDDIE, WAKE UP.

YOU HAVE TO GET UP.

EDDIE!

EDDIE!

AGH!

EDDIE!

DAMMIT, KID, GET BACK HERE!

ARE YOU--

I'M ALIVE. I DON'T KNOW **HOW,** BUT I AM...

COME ON, WE GOTTA GO.

IS HE... DID YOU KILL HIM?

NO.

AND I'M--I'M NOT SURE I **CAN.**

HEHEH... HEHEH...

YOU HAVEN'T SAID ANYTHING SINCE WE LEFT THE SUBWAY. ARE YOU OKAY?

EDDIE IS OKAY. HE'S SLEEPING.

WH... WHAT?

I'VE PLACED EDDIE IN A SORT OF COMA WHILE I WORK TO REPAIR HIS BODY.

BUT YES, HE'S OKAY.

OH.

OKAY... ALIEN...PILOTING... MY BROTHER...

WE'VE ARRIVED. I'LL WAKE EDDIE BACK UP NOW.

ARRIVED? WHERE ARE WE?

OH. HEY, KID. WHAT'S UP?

I HATE THIS. I ASKED... *WHERE ARE WE?*

DAMN, ARE WE HERE?

UGH. YEAH, THIS...THIS IS THAT BAD IDEA I WAS TELLING YOU ABOUT EARLIER...

616

KNOCK KNOCK

HEY, MAN. I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SELLING BUT I HAVE ENOUGH LITTLE LEAGUE CHOCOLATE TO LAST A--

616

LIFE...

...TIME...

617

PARKER!

...IT'S FOR YOU!

CHAPTER TWO:

THE GOD SON

LATER...

UGH... I HATE SYMBIOTE STUFF SO MUCH.

JUST... SO, SO MUCH.

YEAH, WELL... IT AIN'T GREAT OVER HERE NEITHER.

LISTEN, I APPRECIATE YOU MEETING US HERE, BUT--

WELL, WHEN **PETER PARKER** CALLED ME, I KNEW IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT--

YEAH, YEAH. OKAY. CAN YOU HELP US OR NOT?

NOW WHEN YOU SAY **"US"**...

YOU THINK THIS IS FUNNY?

OH MAN, NOT EVEN A **LITTLE.**

I MEAN... **GODS,** EDDIE? WHEN DID YOU START FIGHTING GODS? AND CARNAGE? YOU COME TO ME WITH GODS AND CARNAGE BUT WITH, LIKE... GOD POWERS?

WHAT HAPPENED TO... EVIL BUSINESS-MEN AND DIGGING ROBOTS AND SEWER DINOSAURS AND FUN STUFF LIKE--

I KNEW THIS WAS A MISTAKE. COME ON, DYLAN, WE'RE LEA--

HEY, COME ON, SIT DOWN.

SIT DOWN, EDDIE.

WE CANNOT DO THIS WITHOUT HIM. DO NOT LET YOUR ANGER AND... JEALOUSY GET THE BEST OF YOU.

I PROMISE TO NOT BE HILARIOUS ANYMORE.

FINE. BUT NOT BECAUSE YOU SAID TO STAY.

NO, YEAH, OF COURSE.

AND I'M NOT JEALOUS.

...IF THAT'S WHAT YOU NEED. SURE.

OKAY. *SIGH* LET'S START OVER.

HOW ABOUT WE JUST...SIT FOR A MOMENT AND ENJOY A COFFEE.

I DON'T HAVE ANY MONEY.

OF COURSE. ARE...YOU HUNGRY? DO YOU WANT ME TO ORDER YOU SOME--

MY OTHER PROVIDES ME WITH EVERYTHING I NEED. I DON'T GET HUNGRY.

WHY IS EVERYTHING HORRIBLE WITH YOU?

WELL, HOW ABOUT YOU, BUDDY? YOU HUNGRY OR--

DON'T TALK TO ME.

MENACE.

THIS IS GREAT. YOU GUYS ARE GREAT.

HE'S A GOOD KID.

DYLAN, WHY DON'T YOU GO READ AT THE COUNTER AND LET ME AND SPIDER-MAN TALK, YEAH?

OKAY, EDDIE.

STAY WHERE I CAN SEE YOU.

OKAY, EDDIE.

WHAT?

YOU HAVE A CHILD WITH YOU. EXPLAIN, PLEASE.

IT'S NOT A BIG DEAL. WE DON'T NEED TO TALK ABOUT--

UHHH, INCORRECT. YOU'RE EDDIE BROCK. YOU'RE VENO--

CAN YOU KEEP IT DOWN?!

YOU'RE *VENOM!* AND YOU ARE VERY CASUALLY WALKING AROUND IN CUSTODY OF A SMALL CHILD.

IF YOU WANT MY HELP, WE ARE VERY MUCH GOING TO TALK ABOUT THAT. WHO IS HE? WHERE DID YOU GET HIM?

EXPLAIN. PLEASE.

-SIGH-

HE'S...

HE'S MY KID, PETE.

HENCE THE--

IMMEDIATE DISLIKE OF YOU. YEAH.

DOES HE KNOW?

KNOW...?

THAT HE'S *YOURS.*

BECAUSE I'M HEARING A LOT OF *"EDDIE"* AND NOT A LOT OF *"DAD"*...

IT'S... COMPLICATED...

IT'S REALLY NOT.

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NO. I... I HAVEN'T TOLD HIM YET.

EDDIE...

I KNOW. I KNOW. IT'S JUST...IF HE KNOWS, THEN IT MAKES IT REAL, AND THEN--

IT *IS* REAL.

--AND THEN HE'D BE STUCK WITH ME.

EDDIE...

GROWING UP NOT KNOWING YOUR FATHER... IT'S...

YOU NEED TO TELL HIM.

EDDIE?

OH MY GOD...

HEY, HEY, CAN YOU TURN THAT UP?!

--I REPEAT, THE IMAGES YOU ARE ABOUT TO SEE ARE EXTREMELY GRAPHIC IN NATURE. IF YOU HAVE SMALL CHILDREN WATCHING WITH YOU, WE STRONGLY ADVISE REMOVING THEM FROM THE ROOM.

SWAT

7 BREAKING: MASS GRAVE FOUND

WHAT YOU ARE SEEING NOW IS A MASS GRAVE UNCOVERED IN **NORTHERN NEW JERSEY.**

AUTHORITIES ARE CLAIMING THAT THE "NEST," AS THEY ARE CALLING IT, WAS CREATED IN SUCH AN INTRICATE WAY THAT WHOEVER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR IT **WANTED** IT TO BE FOUND.

WE'VE BEEN TOLD THAT MANY OF THE VICTIMS HAVE ACTUALLY BEEN DEAD FOR MONTHS, EVEN YEARS, BEFORE THEIR BODIES WERE EXHUMED AND PLACED HERE.

CHILLINGLY, ALL OF THE BODIES HAVE HAD THEIR SPINES REMOVED...

7 BREAKING: MASS GRAVE FOUND

A LIST OF THE VICTIMS' IDENTITIES IS STILL BEING COMPILED, BUT WE HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT ALONG WITH SEVERAL NOTABLE FIGURES SUCH AS **ANGELO FORTUNATO,** SON OF THE INFAMOUS CRIME BOSS DON FORTUNATO...

...AND SEVERAL KEY PLAYERS IN THE NOW-DEFUNCT **LIFE FOUNDATION...**

7 BREAKING: MASS GRAVE FOUND

...THAT THE BODY OF NONE OTHER THAN **GENERAL THADDEUS "THUNDERBOLT" ROSS** HAS BEEN DISCOVERED.

GENERAL ROSS' BODY IS CURRENTLY EN ROUTE TO WEST POINT NATIONAL CEMETERY WHERE IT WILL BE PLACED IN ITS ORIGINAL--

7 GEN. ROSS AMONG BODIES FOUND

CLICK

HEY, WHAT THE HELL? I WAS WATCHING THAT!

COME ON, BUDDY--PEOPLE TRYING TO EAT HERE.

@#$% YOU. TURN IT BACK--

HEY, HEY...

SORRY ABOUT MY--NNGH--*FRIEND* HERE. HE'S A FORMER JOURNALIST. MAD THAT PRINT IS DEAD. HATES TV NEWS...

YEAH, YEAH. HEY, COMIC CON AIN'T UNTIL OCTOBER, YOU KNOW?

OH. I *KNOW.*

HEY, WHAT IS GOING ON? WHY DID THAT RATTLE YOU SO--

YOU DON'T SEE IT? GENERAL ROSS?! FORTUNATO?! THE *LIFE FOUNDATION?!*

EDDIE, PEOPLE ARE LOOKING AT US...

THAT GRAVE IS FULL OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE WORN SYMBIOTES. PEOPLE WHO HAVE WORN THEM AND HAVE *DIED!*

HEY, COME ON, I NEED YOU TO CALM--

NO. I KNOW HIM.

THAT'S A MESSAGE. TO ME. FROM KASADY.

A MESSAGE THAT SAYS IT DOESN'T MATTER IF ***YOU'RE DEAD.***

YOU'RE STILL A TARGET.

I'M NOT ARGUING WITH YOU. BUT YOU CAN'T LET HIM DO THIS TO YOU.

IF WE'RE GOING TO FIGHT THIS THING, YOU HAVE TO BE--

IT MEANS THAT ***ANNIE'S*** BODY IS IN THERE.

WHO IS THAT?

MISS, CAN WE GRAB THE--

EVERYBODY DOWN!

NOBODY MOVE AND NOBODY GETS HURT. EMPTY YOUR POCKETS AND LAY DOWN ON THE--

AH, @#$%&...

FLIP A COIN?

NAH, YOU GOT IT.

COME ON, DYLAN, YOU CAN FINISH SPIDER-MAN'S FRIES.

THWIP

THWIP

SO CARNAGE HAS ALL OF THE-- WHAT DID YOU CALL THEM--CODEXES?

KRAWK

THE PLURAL IS CODICES, ACTUALLY.

LOOK AT YOU. OKAY, SO HE HAS THEM. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

IT MEANS IT'S A *RACE.*

AND WE'RE LOSING.

AND MEANWHILE, HE GETS STRONGER WITH EVERY PIECE HE TAKES.

KRUNCH CRUNCH

RIGHT. SO HE'LL BE GUNNING FOR BIGGER GAME NOW. WHICH MEANS...

CLINK THWIP KRAK

YOU. ME. EVERYONE ELSE WHO'S WORN THE SYMBIOTE.

GEEZ. THAT'S A BIG LIST.

RIGHT. SO WE BETTER GET STARTED.

CLU THWIP THWIP RUNG

WE'LL NEED SOMEONE WITH INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SYMBIOTE AND THE TECHNICAL SKILLS TO BUILD A MACHINE TO EXTRACT THE--

FWAM FWAM

GIVE ME A SEC.

WHEN THE POLICE COME, TELL THEM I SAID SOMETHING FUNNY. I HAVE A REPUTATION TO UPHOLD.

SORRY. WE NEED SOMEONE WHO CAN BUILD A MACHINE TO EXTRACT THE CODICES WITHOUT KILLING THE PERSON IT'S IN...

REED WOULD KNOW HOW TO DO IT. BUT IN THE TIME FRAME WE HAVE, HE'D NEED TO HAVE STARTED *MONTHS* AGO...

THWIP

CLAP CLAP CLA

-SIGH-

DAMMIT...

YEAH...

CLAP CLAP CL

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"...I MIGHT KNOW A GUY."

REX STRICKLAND'S SAFE HOUSE. LATER...

Hello, Edward, I received your call...

So, Kasady is finally making his move.

Well then...

...it's about time.

MAKER, WHAT...IS ALL OF THIS?

As you said in your call, you require a method of extracting the codices from their respective hosts without killing them, yes?

You require a machine. Well, here you are...

I built it thirty-five days ago.

HOW...WHY DO YOU HAVE THIS BUILT ALREADY? HOW DID YOU--

As I told you when we first met, the people I work for and I are quite interested in the... scientific implications of a fractured symbiote made whole.

I began building this device before I ever met you. I had hoped to use it on Flash Thompson, but, well...

I've been reassembling it here in your...warehouse as my lab is rather...sensitive at the moment.

MAKER...

REAL SOON YOU AND I ARE GOING TO HAVE AN INTENSE CONVERSATION ABOUT JUST WHAT THE HELL YOU'RE PLANNING...

If you say so.

For now, our interests are aligned. If I were you, I would leave it at that and enjoy your ignorance.

I suspect you won't enjoy the knowledge you think you deser--

UH, EDDIE?

I know time is of the essence now that this new...*darker* Carnage has been set loose.

It will take me a few more hours to complete its construction.

WHO'S YOUR FRIEND?

Oh look, a Spider-Man.

With yet another child...

BE NICE.

HEY, I DON'T THINK WE'VE MET. I'M--

I'm quite aware. Yes.

AND YOU ARE...

THIS IS THE GUY I WAS TELLING YOU ABOUT.

My name is Reed Richards. I'm sure that is quite confusing for you, but we haven't the time to--

WHHAAAATT? REALLY? WAIT, WHAT? HOW? ***REALLY?***

I am from an alternate dimension. Very much like yours but...younger.

I KNOW, LIKE, ***SIX*** ALTERNATE VERSIONS OF MYSELF AND THEY'RE AMAZING.

OUR REED IS ONE OF MY PERSONAL HEROES, SO IF YOU'RE EVEN HALF AS SMART AS HE IS, WE'RE IN GOOD HANDS.

I assure you I am at least half as smart as your Reed.

IS THAT... HIM?

YEAH, THIS IS MY GODSON.

NORMIE, THIS IS EDDIE. HE'S A...FRIEND OF MINE. HE'S GOING TO HELP YOU, OKAY?

HEY, BUDDY, NICE TO MEET YOU.

THIS IS DYLAN. HE'S MY...LITTLE BROTHER.

HI.

HI.

SEE? THERE'S NO REASON TO BE SCARED, OKAY? WE'RE GOING TO GET THAT LITTLE BUG OUT OF YOU IN NO--

This is the child Norman Osborn infected with the Carnage symbiote before he went insane, yes?

Before we can place him in the extractor, I'll need to take a small sample of--

--blood.

What?

NUH-UH. I'M SORRY, BUT YOU AREN'T PUTTING MY GODSON INTO...WHATEVER THIS THING IS UNTIL I KNOW IT'S SAFE.

SIGH

I assure you my calculations are correct. The machine will work perfectly once it's completed.

But if you'd rather I not place the child inside of it first, by all means...

...go and fetch me someone *else* with a codex.

Perhaps a *highly dangerous* and *rather obvious candidate* that *Cletus Kasady would target.*

I don't suppose anyone like that comes to mind.

CHAPTER THREE:

THE LONG RED DARK

RAVENCROFT INSTITUTE FOR THE CRIMINALLY INSANE.

NOW.

OSBORN.

A WHILE BACK, NORMAN OSBORN INFECTED HIMSELF WITH WHAT WAS LEFT OF THE CARNAGE SYMBIOTE.

CALLED HIMSELF THE *RED GOBLIN.*

SICK SON OF A @#$%$ INFECTED HIS GRANDSON, NORMIE, TOO.

PETE WAS ABLE TO PUT NORMAN DOWN, BUT...

...SOMETHING CHANGED IN HIM.

THERE WAS A SPIDER ON THE TOILET SEAT...

...WHEN I WAS THERE LAST NIGHT.

I DIDN'T SEE HIM IN THE DARK...

...BUT BOY...I FELT HIS BITE.

WHEN THE DUST FELL, NORMAN WAS GONE. HIS PSYCHE SHATTERED.

IN ITS PLACE... SOMETHING ELSE CRAWLED IN...

I CAN'T LIE DOWN, I CAN'T SIT UP. I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO!

VSSSSHHH...

A PIECE OF *CLETUS KASADY* INFECTED NORMAN.

HE THINKS HE *IS* CLETUS. HE HAS ALL HIS MEMORIES, ALL HIS HATE AND ALL HIS MURDEROUS INSANITY...

THE NURSES THINK IT'S FUNNY! BUT THAT'S...NOT MY POINT OF VIEW.

IF IT WERE UP TO ME, HE'D BE UNDERGROUND INSTEAD OF ROTTING AWAY IN THIS HELLHOLE.

AND NOW, WE GOTTA BREAK HIM OUT BEFORE THE *REAL* CLETUS COMES AND KILLS HIM.

AND WHEN I GET BACK HOME AGAIN, I'LL TELL YOU WHAT I'LL DO!

HATE TO SAY IT, BUT PETE WAS RIGHT...

I'LL MAKE THAT @#$%% **SUFFER** FOR THE **PAIN** I'M GOING THROUGH.

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I HATE THIS SYMBIOTE @#$% TOO.

OKAY, EVERYONE'S CLEAR. YOU CAN COME OUT NOW.

JOHN JAMESON...

...YOU'RE A LIFE-SAVER.

LITERALLY.

VENOM?!

SPIDEY, LOOK OUT! HE'S RIGHT BEHIND--

HEY! WHAT--

THWIP

AT EASE, JOHN. HE'S WITH ME.

WHAT? BUT HE ATTACKED RYKER'S! HE KILLED--

IT WASN'T HIM. THAT WAS CARNAGE WEARING HIS FACE.

YEAH... OKAY. IF YOU SAY SO, SPIDEY.

THANK YOU FOR GETTING US IN HERE. I OWE YOU ONE.

I'LL NEED IT. HAD TO PULL EVERY FAVOR I HAD TO CLEAR THIS PLACE OUT LIKE THIS.

WE'VE LOCKED DOWN THE MAXIMUM SECURITY WING AND ARE CALLING IT A *"TEMPORARY PHYSIOLOGICAL TEST SITE."* IT'LL HOLD WATER AS LONG AS NO ONE SQUINTS AT IT TOO HARD.

STILL, I... I SAW WHAT CARNAGE IS CAPABLE OF OUT IN DOVERTON.* NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT.

IF YOU SAY WE NEED TO MOVE OSBORN...IF YOU THINK IT'LL HELP US TO STOP THAT MONSTER, YOU HAVE MY HELP.

*DOVERTON? WHAT'S **THAT** ABOUT? CHECK OUT **WEB OF VENOM: CULT OF CARNAGE** TO FIND OUT! --DEVIN

SORRY ABOUT THE GUN. HARD TO KEEP TRACK WITH YOU...

DON'T SWEAT IT. SHOOTING ME WOULD HAVE JUST RUINED YOUR DAY, ANYWAY.

I'M STILL A WEREWOLF, YOU KNOW. YOU EVER WANNA COMPARE MONSTERS I'M HAPPY TO--

HOW ABOUT WE STOP COMPARING THINGS ALTOGETHER AND PUT OUR GAME FACES ON...

...WE'RE HERE.

ALL RIGHT, HOW DO WE DO THIS? WE HAVE OVERRIDE CODES FOR THIS CELL OR AM I RIPPING THE DOOR OFF ITS HINGES?

NOT SO FAST. WE NEED HIM SEDATED BEFORE WE OPEN THE DOOR. IF HE GETS LOOSE RIGHT NOW HE COULD--

AGH!

WHAT IS IT?

SPIDEY-SENSE! BUT WHAT...

JOHN...

WE'RE NEXT TO NORMAN OSBORN'S CELL... WHAT ELSE DO YOU NEED?!

NOT HOW IT WORKS! IT ONLY GOES OFF IF I'M IN IMMEDIATE...

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

I'M SORRY...

HE'S... INSIDE...MY HEAD...I HAVE TO...

I HAVE TO GET HIM OUT!

AGHHH!

BLAM

SMAK

BWAH

BWAH

TOO LOUD, EDDIE! MAKE IT STOP!

AGHHH!

AGHH!

JOHN, STOP! YOU CAN'T LET NORMAN OUT!

HE WILL RELEASE HIM! GOD IS--

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?! JOHN, WHAT DID YOU DO?!

GOD IS COMING...

BWAH BWAH BWAH

AND WHEN I GET BACK HOME AGAIN...

BWAH BWAH BWAH

OH, I'LL TELL YOU WHAT I'LL DO.

BWAH BWAH BWAH

I'LL MAKE THAT LITTLE SPIDER SUFFER...

...FOR THE PAIN I'M GOING THROUGH.

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FLICK

I'VE HAD SO MANY NEEDLES...

SPOK

HEY! NO! AGH, WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?!

...I'M LOOKING LIKE A SIEVE.

CHOMP

NO, NOOAAAAGHH!

FLICK

RAAGHH!

FLICK

GET IT OFF OF ME!

FLICK

AGHH! GOD, NO!

BOOM BOOM

BOOM BOOM BOOM

I PROMISE YOU...THAT SPIDER...

...HASN'T VERY LONG TO LIVE.

BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BWAH BWAH BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM

EDDIE! THE PAIN!

DAMMIT, I KNOW! AGH!

P-PETE! LITTLE HELP!

HE'S COMING! HAHA!

THWIP

LITTLE BUSY DEALING WITH A DARK-GOD-INFECTED MAYBE-SOON-TO-BE WEREWOLF, MAN!

EDDIE! LOSING... CONTROL... CAN'T HOLD ON...

RRRRR, FINE!

DO IT... MYSELF!

RAGHHH!

RAGGHHH!

AHH!!!

BOOM

BWAH

BOOM

BWAH

BOOM

BWA--

GEEZ, ED, YOU OKAY?

HAHA! DO YOU HEAR IT? HE'S COMING!

WE'LL LIVE.

NOW, WE DOING THIS OR--

HE'S HERE! DO YOU HEAR--

SORRY, JOHN!

MY OTHER FEELS IT BEFORE I DO...

SENDS A KNIFE INTO MY PSYCHE TO TELL ME TO STOP.

AGHH!

TO LISTEN.

HEY. WHAT WAS THAT? ARE YOU ALL--

MY OTHER... SCREAMING IN MY BRAIN. NEVER FELT ANYTHING LIKE IT...

IT CAN SENSE THEM. DO YOU...

PETE...

CHIRP CHIRP CHIRP

AT FIRST I CAN'T PLACE IT...SOUNDS LIKE A SWARM. A BIBLICAL PLAGUE... AND THEN IT HITS ME...

...DO YOU HEAR THAT?

THAT SOUND... IT'S NOT LOCUSTS...

IT'S TEETH.

HA HA HA!

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WE GOTTA GET OUT OF HERE. WE CAN'T FIGHT THIS...

NO. IF HE KILLS NORMAN AND TAKES HIS CODEX, HE JUST GETS STRONGER.

WE HAVE TO...

UGH.

WE HAVE TO SAVE NORMAN OSBORN.

HAHAH! NORMAN OSBORN IS HERE?! SAVE *ME* A PIECE!

SHUT UP!

ALL RIGHT, WEB-HEAD. YOU READY?

UGH...

WHERE'S THE SENTRY WHEN YOU NEED HIM, RIGHT?

EVERYTHING INSIDE OF MY OTHER COMES ROARING TO LIFE.

AND I REMEMBER...

FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE *DRAGON*, SINCE *KNULL*, SINCE THE LOSS...

...THE *BETRAYAL*...

...I REMEMBER WHY I DO THIS.

WHY I LET THIS... *ALIEN* ATTACH ITSELF TO ME. MAKE ME MORE THAN I WAS...

SHRIP

I USED TO THINK IT WAS A PARASITE... THAT IT TOOK FROM ME, AND NEVER GAVE ANYTHING BACK...

BUT HERE, FIGHTING FOR MY LIFE, I REMEMBER...

...IT GIVES ME *EXACTLY* WHAT I NEED...

...BECAUSE SOMETIMES WHAT I NEED *IS PAIN.*

RAGHHH!

HEY!

THESE ARE INNOCENT PEOPLE!

THEY'RE MURDEROUS PSYCHOPATHS INCARCERATED FOR THEIR CRIMES, INDICTED BY A JURY OF THEIR PEERS! WHAT ABOUT THAT IS--

YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN! THEY AREN'T IN CONTROL!

NO KILLING, EDDIE!

FINE! YOU GOT A *BETTER* PLAN?!

MAYBE! DO THEY SHARE YOUR WEAKNESSES?

NOT CLETUS, NO! ELECTRICITY SEEMS TO BE THE ONLY THING THAT WORKS ON HIM. I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THESE THINGS.

GOT IT, OKAY! HERE'S THE PLAN--I'LL SET OFF THE EMERGENCY SPRINKLERS, YOU GET TO SOME ELECTRICAL CONDUITS AND--

SPIDER-MAN, WATCH OUT!

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HAHA! HELLO AGAIN, LITTLE BUG!

AGHH!

NO!

WE HAVE MISSED YOU!

AGHH! GET...OFF!

DO YOU WANT TO SEE A MAGIC TRICK?!

KRUNCH

OPEN SESAME!

RAGHH! NO!

HEHEH... WELL...

...ISN'T THIS A TREAT?

RAGH! HEHEH! STAY STILL! I WANT TO SEE WHAT YOU LOOK LIKE INSIDE!

SWIPE

AGH! SORRY, GOBBY.

I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR YOUR--AGH!--CRAZY RIGHT NOW!

HAHA! WHAT THE HELL IS A GOBBY, YOU SICK FREA--

HEY, DUMMY!

HEY, NORMAN!

WE'RE TRYING TO SAVE YOU, DUMMY!

EDDIE, WHAT ARE YOU DOING? WE HAVE TO GET HIM OUT OF--

I'LL HOLD THE DOOR, *YOU* GET US OUT OF HERE!

WHAT?! HOW?

WE'RE TRAPPED IN A PRISON CELL WITH THREE-FOOT CONCRETE WALLS ON ALL SIDES AND--

AGHH! DON'T BE CLEVER! BE STRONG!

...RIGHT.

THIS...IS GOING TO HURT.

THWIP

HAGH!

HAGH!

HAGH!

HAGH!

HAGH!

RAGHHHH! COME ON!

HAGH!

HAGH!

HAGH!

HAGH!

AHHHH!!!

KRAKOOM

ENOUGH!

NO!

EDDIE, NO! GET UP, WE HAVE TO--

PETE, LOOK...

NO!

AT LAST, THE LITTLE CARNAGE PRINCE...

OH, HOW I HAVE WANTED TO MEET YOU...

DON'T KILL HIM! PLEASE!

BWHAHA! KILL HIM?! PAY ATTENTION, LITTLE BUG!!!

I'M NOT HERE TO KILL!

DEAR GOD, NO...

I CAME HERE TO MAKE FRIENDS!

TO BE CONTINUED...

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SEND EMAILS TO **SPIDEYOFFICE@MARVEL.COM** (PLEASE MARK "OKAY TO PRINT"!)

AT LAST!

After over a year of planning and six months of work on this issue alone, ABSOLUTE CARNAGE #1 is a comic book that exists that YOU get to hold in your hands RIGHT NOW!

If this is your first VENOM book in a while, or your first one ever, WELCOME! We hope you survive the experience.

Donny and Ryan, and Frank and Clayton--the whole VENOM team--are so happy that you've joined us for this crazy, terrifying ride. It represents, literally, the culmination of everyone's efforts for over a year, so we hope you enjoyed this first chapter, and let me be the first to say, things only get crazier from here!

I know what you're saying to yourself: "Crazier than Norman Osborn wearing the Carnage symbiote again?! Comics don't GET any crazier than that."

This is Cletus Kasady--CARNAGE--we're talking about, with Cates and Stegman at the helm, so you BET they do!

The madness started back in January--in the first full week of 2019. Donny and Ryan both came to the Marvel offices to discuss what was then just going to be an arc of VENOM, maybe a crossover with Spidey at most...ABSOLUTE CARNAGE.

Three days later, after talking through the story itself, everyone in the room knew we had something special on our hands. A love letter to all the symbiotic stories Marvel's creators have crafted over all these years, ABSOLUTE CARNAGE will stretch into every corner of symbiote mythos. Symbiotes young and old will find their way through the streets of New York, and you won't want to miss a single page!

But there'll be plenty of time for selling later. FIRST...let's dive into some letters!

Dear Venom creative team,

First off, I just want to say how amazing this Venom run has been. I just picked it up thinking, "Well, I will see if the first issue is any good."

It was amazing, and I have been reading since. Donny Cates and Ryan Stegman are a great team. And I am super excited to see where you guys go in ABSOLUTE CARNAGE!

--Matt

Dear Mr. Cates and Mr. Stegman,

This past Christmas marked a year since my wife lost her father, and she has had a difficult time through what was previously her favorite time of year. One day, when she was at her wit's end on how to preoccupy her mind, I suggested one of your independent books that helped not only to bring peace in the chaos but ignited a desire to read your run on VENOM!

Eddie Brock's relationship with the symbiote has quickly become the symbol of our relationship, as we both have been facing demons that we fight together as often as we can. Yet, there are battles that we each must face alone, and the other can only quietly support from the sidelines. We eagerly wait for each new issue and compare notes on who relates more to what character that month.

My sincerest commendations to the entire creative team! You all put out consistently amazing work! May we enjoy your monthly successes for years to come. Thanks for the ride thus far.

From Hawai'i,
Aloha,
Ka'Eo

Hi, Ka'Eo, and thank you so much for your touching letter. It's so great to hear that the work we do here helps you readers out there in Mighty Marveldom.

Thanks so much for reading, and we hope you guys still dig where we're headed, even if we're putting Venom through the wringer!

To everyone at Eddie's Clubhouse,

I meant to send this a while ago, but I've been busy lately. First off, I just want to say that while I only started reading VENOM a year or two ago, I've already become a huge fan! The stories are amazing, and the chemistry between Eddie and the symbiote really draws me in!

One of the things that I like about Venom (and the symbiotes in general) is that they've bonded to a number of hosts throughout the years. After

VENOMVERSE, I did some digging to see what hosts the Venom symbiote has bonded to in the past, so when I heard about ABSOLUTE CARNAGE and how Cletus will be going after everyone bonded to a symbiote, I was really excited!

However, I became even more excited when I learned about ABSOLUTE CARNAGE: SYMBIOTE SPIDER-MAN. Thanks to my research, I knew the host you were referring to was the tourist the symbiote bonded to Peter Parker in SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #99-#100!!! I'm really excited that you're looking back at random moments in Marvel history and using them to make something great!!! I can't wait to see where this story goes and what's gonna happen next!

Until Next Time!
Jared

(P.S. At some point in the comics, please have the Venom symbiote bond to Iron Man!!!)

Hi, Jared! Thanks for becoming a Venomaniac! We're so glad you gave the book a shot a year ago and stuck with us. Hopefully ABSOLUTE CARNAGE has lived up to your expectations, and, man, have you got a great eye!

I won't confirm or deny who the start of that particular ABSOLUTE CARNAGE tie-in issue will be, but I WILL say that if you've been reading SYMBIOTE SPIDER-MAN regularly, you might have noticed that in issue #3, there was an extra page in there, featuring that very same tourist exiting a bus in New York City.

What adventures he may go on next are anybody's guess…

Team VENOM,

Obviously, I agree with everyone writing in--you guys are freaking killing it! I recently introduced my 30-year-old sister to this run of VENOM. Last night she called me to tell me Knull showed up in a nightmare and told her she belongs to the abyss! We high-fived for like 10 minutes and sent out this email. You have added so much depth to the character. Thanks for this roller coaster of emotions, nostalgic thoughts and pure badassery!

--Drake M.

Hah! Awesome, Drake. That sounds like a recurring dream I have about missing deadlines.

That's all the mail for this one, folks, but be sure to write us at spideyoffice@marvel.com and mark your letters "OKAY TO PRINT" and your note may appear in print in the next installment of this very letters column!

And remember – tell your local comic book shop you want the best, and this month the best is CARNAGE! 'Cause this summer…

CARNAGE RULES!

#carnagerules

And don't miss ABSOLUTE CARNAGE: SEPARATION ANXIETY #1, one of the best one-shots I've ever worked on EVER and ABSOLUTE CARNAGE: SCREAM #1--both on sale next week!

Stay sharp!
Devin
@edevinlewis

#2

ABSOLUTE CARNAGE CHECKLIST

AUGUST
ABSOLUTE CARNAGE #1
ABSOLUTE CARNAGE #2
ABSOLUTE CARNAGE: MILES MORALES #1
ABSOLUTE CARNAGE: SCREAM #1
ABSOLUTE CARNAGE: LETHAL PROTECTORS #1
ABSOLUTE CARNAGE VS. DEADPOOL #1
ABSOLUTE CARNAGE: SEPARATION ANXIETY #1
VENOM #17

SEPTEMBER
ABSOLUTE CARNAGE #3
ABSOLUTE CARNAGE: MILES MORALES #2
ABSOLUTE CARNAGE: SCREAM #2
ABSOLUTE CARNAGE: LETHAL PROTECTORS #2
ABSOLUTE CARNAGE VS. DEADPOOL #2
ABSOLUTE CARNAGE:
GHOST RIDER - SYMBIOTE OF VENGEANCE #1
ABSOLUTE CARNAGE: SYMBIOTE SPIDER-MAN #1
ABSOLUTE CARNAGE: AVENGERS #1
VENOM #18
AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #30

OCTOBER
ABSOLUTE CARNAGE #4
ABSOLUTE CARNAGE: MILES MORALES #3
ABSOLUTE CARNAGE: SCREAM #3
ABSOLUTE CARNAGE: LETHAL PROTECTORS #3
ABSOLUTE CARNAGE VS. DEADPOOL #3
ABSOLUTE CARNAGE: IMMORTAL HULK #1
VENOM #19
AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #31

NOVEMBER
ABSOLUTE CARNAGE #5
VENOM #20

RAVENCROFT
INSTITUTE FOR THE CRIMINALLY INSANE

INITIAL BEHAVIORAL ASSESSMENT

Instructions: *This form is to be completed, signed and dated for all clients who are being referred for psychiatric services.*

Presentation at ED ☐ Self ☐ Family/Friend ☒ Police ☐ Provider ☐ Other ☐ N/A

Referral Source/Relationship POLICE (SPIDER-MAN) Date/Time of Referral 6/4

☒ On-site OR ☐ Walk-In AND ☒ Scheduled OR ☐ Unscheduled

Assessment Began 3/1 (Date MM/DD) and 9 00 (Time 00:00) ☐ a.m. ☒ p.m. Ended 3/1 (Date MM/DD) and 12 00 (Time 00:00) ☐ a.m. ☒ p.m.

Name of Client CLETUS KASADY (ALIAS: CARNAGE) ☒ Male ☐ Female

Street Address City Zip ( ) Phone

Date of Birth 04/07/93 (m m d d y y) Patient No. ASM01036 1

Employed? ☐ YES ☒ NO ☐ Unknown Occupation Veteran? Yes ☐ No ☒ Combat? Yes ☐ No ☒

Language ☒ English ☐ Spanish ☐ Arabic ☐ Chinese ☐ Other Interpreter Needed ☐ Yes ☒ No

☐ Deaf/Hard of Hearing with ☐ American Sign Language

☐ Deaf/Hard of Hearing (does not communicate using ASL)

Recent Stressors: ☒ Relationship ☐ Family ☐ Job ☐ Housing ☐ Financial ☒ Legal ☐ Other

Medical History/Treatment/Pertinent injuries: (diagnosis/describe) PATIENT ADMITTED AFTER PHYSICAL CONFLICT W/ SPIDER-MAN. SUFFERED SHOCK SYMPTOMS AFTER BEING FORCIBLY REMOVED FROM ALIEN/EXTERRESTRIAL SYMBIOTE

Behavioral Health History/Treatment

Substance Use History/Treatment

Is there a family history of substance use issues? ☐ YES ☐ NO ☒ Unknown

Does the person currently use mind-altering substances (drugs, alcohol, marijuana, etc.) ☐ YES ☐ NO ☒ Unknown

If yes, what substances: Blood Work inconclusive. Prolonged exposure to ALIEN SYMBIOTE APPEARS TO HAVE AFFECTED PATIENT'S BODY CHEMISTRY

Mental Health History/Treatment

Is there a family history of mental health issues? ☒ YES ☐ NO ☐ Unknown

(diagnosis/describe) PATIENT'S MOTHER DIAGNOSED W/ PARANOID SCIZOPHRENIA/Paternal History Unknown

Is there a family history of suicide attempt(s) or completion(s)? ☐ YES ☐ NO ☒ Unknown

(describe) Mother Died During Childbirth / Paternal History Unknown

TRANSCRIPT OF PSYCHICIATRIC EVALUATION
PATIENT NAME: CLETUS KASADY
PATIENT NO.: ASM010361
TRANSCRIBED BY CLAY McLEOD CHAPMAN

INTERVIEWER: Testing. Testing. Dr. Davinia Marcia Pournella initiating intake interview with subject #626, a Mr. Cletus Kasady, at approximately...3:32 PM. Hello, Mr. Kasady.

KASADY: Please. My daddy was the Mr. Kasady around our house. You can call me Cletus, Doc.

INTERVIEWER: I hope you're comfortable, Cletus. The restraints aren't too tight?

KASADY: Snug as a bug in a rug, Doc. You recording this? That what you're doing?

INTERVIEWER: As a matter of fact, yes, I am. Are you uneasy with that?

KASADY: Don't like it. Don't like it one bit. No, sir.

INTERVIEWER: And why's that?

KASADY: You ever had a tape recorder as a kid, Doc? Ever record your own voice for XXXX and giggles? But when you play it back, it don't sound nothing like you? Nothing at all. Matter a fact, it sounds like somebody else's voice altogether... Like it's a different person using your mouth.

INTERVIEWER: Is that how you feel sometimes, Cletus? Like you're a different person?

KASADY: Hell, it's a regular party in my head sometimes. A real rager, you know? I've invited along all my friends and they've cranked the music up so loud, I can't even hear myself think.

INTERVIEWER: I imagine that must be painful.

KASADY: Painful? Doc, have you ever been to one of my brain jamborees? The party don't stop! You should swing by after work. Hop on in.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you for the invite. Now I was wondering if we might talk about why--

KASADY: Turn it off.

INTERVIEWER: Excuse me?

KASADY: I said, turn the tape recorder off. You ain't stealing my voice.

INTERVIEWER: I assure you, Cletus, that's not my intention. This is merely for reference's sake.

KASADY: Ever hear how Native Americans never liked having their picture taken 'cause they thought the photograph captured their soul? I remember hearing that and thinking to myself... That's just silly. But the more I got to thinking about it, the more I kinda liked the idea. Having something to hold onto of somebody special. Somebody you looooved. A little piece of them.

INTERVIEWER: Mr. Kasady--

KASADY: Anybody can take a picture. I wanted more of my special friends. I wanted something reeeal special. Something nobody else could have. I wanted to keep their screams.

INTERVIEWER: That's close enough, Mr. Kasady. Lean back, please--

KASADY: I kept that tape recorder I had when I was a kid. Sometimes I made tapes for my special friends. And just when I was done playing with them, I made sure I brought that itty-bitty built-in microphone right up to their mouths and pressed record right before they breathed their last. I captured that rattle, Doc. That death rattle. Their last exhale is mine, sucked right into the cassette. And I got so many tapes, doc. I play 'em on the car stereo. I make little mixtapes--my Greatest Gasps, I guess you could call it. One rattle after another.

INTERVIEWER: That's enough. I'm concluding this interview--

KASADY: Some of them are move lively than others. Some of them have a husky heft to them, some even say a word, I capture their voices, I listen to them, I play them over and over again, all those sighs, all those squeals, all those screams cut short they're mine all mine I hear them all the time all the time I hear them all I hear them all I hear them all the

(END OF RECORDING.)